

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application are respectfully requested. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-9 will be pending.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-9 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,340,897 to Miller. The Examiner suggests that Miller teaches a maintenance method for an inkjet printer comprising wiping a nozzle surface of a print head with a wiper, blocking the nozzle surface from outside, and cleaning the print head excluding the blocked nozzle surface.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Miller fails to teach or suggest the step of *blocking the nozzle surface from outside*. As shown in FIG. 4A, for example, and described in the specification, in exemplary embodiments of the present invention, the nozzle surface is *blocked* such that a cleaning arm can wipe ink from a non-nozzle surface of the print head without wiping ink back onto the nozzle surface, which was a disadvantage of the prior art described in the background of the invention, and shown in FIG. 1B. Miller, at best, teaches wiping the nozzle surface and rear surface with porous brushes. The brushes must be porous to permit the vacuum function of Miller. However the brush structure of Miller is a porous and unitary structure which does not permit blocking of the nozzle surface and cleaning of the print head. Miller does not, therefore, teach or suggest wiping a nozzle surface of a print head with a wiper, *blocking the nozzle surface from outside*, and cleaning the print head, as claimed in claim 1. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 1 are respectfully requested.

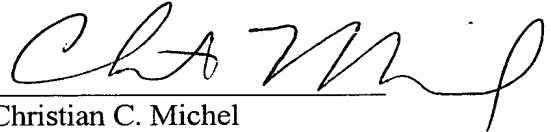
Claims 2-9 all depend from claim 1, and accordingly should be allowed for at least the reasons discussed above. Claims 2 requires *capping* the nozzle surface. As described in the specification, capping prevents contact with external air. Since the brushes 19a of Miller are specifically intended to *allow* air to pass through (note the connection to vacuum 14 and tube 15), the Miller device is incapable of preventing contact with external air. Accordingly, claim 2 is not anticipated by Miller.

Claim 1 has been amended to remove the limitation: "excluding the blocked nozzle surface." Claims 3, 5 and 7-9 have been amended to be consistent with amended claim 1. No new matter has been added. The Examiner is kindly requested to reconsider claims 1-9 in view of the amendments and arguments made herein.

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In view of the above, it is believed that the application is in condition for allowance and notice to this effect is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'C. Michel', written in black ink.

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